

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 /085 W

----- 103457

R 271530Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5812

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 3112

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR MO SS SP

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: SPANISH-MOROCCAN INCIDENTS MULTIPLY

REF: RABAT 3067

1. IN CONVERSATION JUNE 26, SPANISH CHARGE GAVE FOLLOWING
VERSION OF EXCHANGE OF SHOOTING ON SAHARA BORDER PREVIOUS DAY:
MOROCCANS OPENED FIRE ON TWO SPANISH RECONNAISSANCE PLANES,
MISSING THEM. SPANISH FORCES ON SCENE THEN RESPONDED WITH
MORTAR FIRE. SPANIAR COMMENTED THAT IN INCIDENTS OF THIS
SORT, LOCAL COMMANDERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO ACT ON THEIR OWN
AND EMOTIONS MIGHT WELL COME INTO PLAY. THUS FAR SEMI-OFFICIAL
PRESS HAS CARRIED ONLY BRIEF AFP ITEM ON THIS INCIDENT,
ALTHOUGH ISTIQLAL AND USFP PAPERS HAVE GIVEN IT BANNER
HEADLINES.

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2. SPANISH CHARGE ALSO INDICATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN TWO

BOMBING INCIDENTS IN CEUTA JUNE 26 CAUSING BOTH SPANISH AND MOROCCAN CASUALTIES. IN ONE, BOMB CONCEALED IN MOROCCAN CAR IN FRONT OF HOTEL BLEW UP, (KILLING ONE SPANIARD, ACCORDING TO SPANISH CONSULAR OFFICER IN TANGIER). CHARGE SAID ONE MOROCCAN KILLED, PRESUMABLY CARRIER OF OTHER BOMB, WHICH CONSOFF SAID EXPLODED AT NAVAL HQ (COMANDANCIA DE LA MARINA). CONSOFF ADDED THAT CEUTA BORDER WAS CLOSED IMMEDIATELY, BUT REOPENED MORNING OF JUNE 27 AND "TRAFFIC NORMAL". WHILE REPORT OF INCIDENT IN ISTIQLAL'S AL-ALAM SOMEWHAT SENSATIONAL, SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS COVERAGE WAS RESTRAINED AND GAVE NO HINT OF POSSIBLE MOROCCAN INVOLVEMENT.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL TELLS US THAT A BOMBING INCIDENT IN MELILLA ABOUT A WEEK AGO RESULTED IN INCURSION INTO MOROCCAN TERRITORY BY ABOUT 200 SPANISH TROOPS, WHO OPENED FIRE. OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT A MOROCCAN PROTEST TO SPAIN WAS PLANNED OVER THIS INCIDENT.

4. ON JUNE 25 SPANISH EMBASSY AMPLIFIED ON REPORT OF FLU ATTACK ON SPANISH FRONTIER POST AT TAH AND SUBSEQUENT KILLING OF FIVE SPANISH SOLDIERS BY MINE (REFTEL). SPANISH CHARACTERIZED ATTACKERS AS MOROCCANS WHO WERE BEATEN OFF BY SAHRAOUI DEFENDERS OF OUTPOST, WITH TWO DEAD, AFTER HOUR-LONG EXCHANGE OF FIRE. SAHRAOUI MAY HAVE SUFFERED ONE WOUNDED, EMBASSY ADDED. SPANISH EMBASSY AT PAINS TO PUT BEST FACE ON MATTER BY SAYING THAT KILLING OF SPANISH TROOPS WAS "ACCIDENT" IN THAT MINES HAD BEEN ABANDONED, NOT BURIED. ANOTHER SOURCE TELLS US GOM SUBSEQUENTLY APOLOGIZED FOR TAH INCIDENT, BLAMING IT ON LOCAL INITIATIVE. WE NOTE MADRID 4470 REPORTS THAT GOS LODGED STRONG PROTEST AGAINST RECENT INCIDENTS IN SAHARA, AND FBIS LONDON'S P262001Z JUNE 75 ADDS POINT THAT GOS WARNED OF SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IN EVENT OF FURTHER ACTS.

5. COMMENT: REPORTED MOROCCAN APOLOGY FOR TAH INCIDENT MAY HAVE FOLLOWED SPANISH PROTEST AND COULD HELP EXPLAIN RELATIVELY CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE OF SPANISH EMBASSY. RESTRAINED SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS COVERAGE OF SAHARAN FRONTIER AND CEUTA INCIDENTS AND OMISSION THUS FAR OF MENTION OF MELILLA INCIDENT WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE OFFICIAL MOROCCAN DESIRE TO PLAY DOWN TENSIONS. NEVERTHELESS, SITUATION OBVIOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL

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DETERIORATING IN FACE OF MULTIPLICATION OF INCIDENTS AND THEIR EXPANSION TO CEUTA AND MELILLA "FRONTS".
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